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RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/DIRSSP WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
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RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 6183

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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR T, VC AND EUR/PRA  
DOE FOR NNSA/NA-24  
CIA FOR WINPAC  
JCS FOR J5/DDGSA  
SECDEF FOR OSD(P)/STRATCAP  
NAVY FOR CNO-N5JA AND DIRSSP  
AIRFORCE FOR HQ USAF/ASX AND ASXP  
DTRA FOR OP-OS OP-OSA AND DIRECTOR  
NSC FOR LOOK  
DIA FOR LEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/29/2019  
TAGS: [KACT](#) [MARR](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [RS](#) [US](#) [START](#)  
SUBJECT: START FOLLOW-ON NEGOTIATIONS, GENEVA (SFO-GVA-V):  
(U) CONVERSION OR ELIMINATION AND NOTIFICATIONS WORKING  
GROUP MEETING, SEPTEMBER 23, 2009

REF: GENEVA 0811 (SFO-GVA-V-024)

Classified By: A/S Rose E. Gottemoeller, United States  
START Negotiator. Reasons: 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is SFO-GVA-V-008.

[1](#)2. (U) Meeting Date: September 23, 2009  
Time: 10:30 A.M. - 12:45 P.M.  
Place: Russian Mission, Geneva

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SUMMARY  
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[1](#)3. (S) The first meeting of the Conversion or Elimination (CorE) and Notifications Working Group (WG) was held at the Russian Mission on September 23, 2009. The Russian WG chair explained the Russian approach used to draft the CorE section of Russia's proposed annex, and made a verbal presentation on key elements of the section (REF A). The Russian Head of Delegation, Ambassador Antonov, came into the meeting shortly after it started. He did not actively participate, but spoke with several members of the Russian Delegation during breaks.

[1](#)4. (S) The Russian Delegation explained its CorE proposal relied heavily on national technical means for verification, using "visits" should a Party wish to send an inspection team to confirm elimination or conversion. The Russian WG chair stressed that eliminations and conversions must be irreversible. Russian CorE proposals would allow each Party to independently determine its procedures for eliminations,

but included some mandatory steps, such as removal or destruction of SLBM hatches. Conversion procedures would also be determined independently, but would only be used for conversion to another type or category of accountable item.

15. (S) The Russians briefly explained their concept for notifications and proposed to delete notifications for rail-mobile missiles, cooperative measures, portal monitoring, post-exercise dispersal inspections, ballistic missile throw-weights, and would not include telemetric frequencies in flight-test notifications.

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START C OR E PROCEDURES  
UNFAIR TO RUSSIA  
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16. (S) After welcoming the U.S. Delegates to the first meeting of the CorE and Notifications WG, Colonel Ryzhkov explained that the Russian Federation's CorE proposals were based on a study that concluded certain START CorE procedures were either not cost-effective or were unfair to Russia. Furthermore, extensive and detailed START CorE procedures made long-term confrontation over compliance issues virtually unavoidable.

17. (S) As examples, Ryzhkov highlighted the issue between the United States and Russia that arose over the self-contained dispensing mechanisms (SCDMs) during the elimination of 109 SS-25 ICBMs, and the issue between the United States and Ukraine over elimination procedures for

SS-24 solid-propellant motors. In the case of the SS-25 eliminations, he stated it was evident to the United States that the missiles themselves were gone and the SCDMs were no threat. As for the Ukrainian motors, Ryzhkov claimed that any engineer would agree that drilling holes in the rocket motors rendered them unusable as stages for ICBMs. Other examples of confrontation also existed, such as with Peacekeeper eliminations.

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THE CHOICE IS YOURS,  
BUT MAKE IT IRREVERSIBLE  
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18. (S) According to Ryzhkov, Russia's proposal would allow each Party to determine its own CorE procedures that would be less expensive and easier to implement, yet would still adhere to the "unshakable" principle of irreversibility; that is, procedures that rendered the item incapable of being used for its original purpose. Ryzhkov claimed that despite each side determining its own procedures, the degree of transparency would not be reduced, and Russia would retain the notification regime for eliminations almost unchanged.

19. (S) While each Party was free to define its own procedures, Ryzhkov noted that the Russian proposal incorporated some key elimination procedures that would still be mandatory. For example, it would still be necessary to remove or destroy the hatches during SLBM launcher eliminations and to remove or destroy basic structural elements of a heavy bomber (HB) for eliminations. In addition, Russia had tried to standardize the procedures for similar categories of items, such as all solid-propellant ICBMs.

110. (S) Regarding conversions, Ryzhkov explained that each side could also define its own procedures that would result in external or functional differences. These distinguishing features and differences could then be exhibited to the other side to confirm conversion. He reminded the WG that the complex START procedures used to confirm the conversion of U.S. heavy bombers to non-nuclear configurations and for the conversion of an SS-27 mobile launcher to launch the prototype RS-24 ICBM had resulted in serious issues for the Joint Compliance and Inspection Commission (JCIC). Ryzhkov

stated that if we began negotiations by focusing on detailed procedures, we would fail to reach our goal to complete a new treaty.

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NTM WILL SUFFICE  
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¶11. (S) Ryzhkov stated that Russia did not understand why it was necessary for the United States to observe the entire elimination process when national technical means (NTM) could be used to verify the elimination of liquid and solid-propellant ICBMs and SLBMs, as well as silo, mobile, and SLBM launchers, and facilities. To enhance the effectiveness of NTM, Ryzhkov said Russia would provide a notification to the United States of the completion of elimination procedures for HBs, launchers, and solid-propellant missiles, and then display the eliminated

item in the open for 30 days thereafter. The item would be removed from accountability after receipt of the notification, according to Ryzhkov. As an additional measure, Ryzhkov said each Party could confirm the elimination during visits to facilities where the eliminations had taken place.

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RUSSIAN C OR E  
PROPOSAL BLOW-BY-BLOW  
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¶12. (S) Ryzhkov provided a short summary of each of the Russian-proposed CorE sections, highlighted key elements, and noted that the Russian approach allowed for elimination or conversation at minimal cost, with minimal difficulty, and removed the potential for confrontation. Colonel Zaytsev added that the Russian approach was an attempt to make CorE procedures easier to implement in light of the disputed U.S. conversion of the B-1B HB in which both Parties still believed their Treaty interpretation was correct.

-- Subsection I: CorE procedures for any ICBM launcher, whether silo or mobile, would be determined by each side, subject to verification by NTM and, if desired, an inspection team could conduct a visit to confirm that the elimination procedures were carried out in such a manner that rendered the launcher incapable of launching an ICBM, or that the conversion procedures were completed in such a manner that the launcher could no longer contain an ICBM of the previous type. Ryzhkov noted that the end result of CorE procedures for silo or mobile launchers would be the same.

-- Subsection II: CorE procedures for SLBM launchers would be the same in principle as for ICBM launchers with the added requirement to remove or destroy the launch tube hatches for eliminations.

-- Subsection III: For CorE procedures for HB, Ryzhkov reiterated his earlier point that elimination procedures had to provide for removal or destruction of basic structural elements of the bomber.

-- Subsection IV: Ryzhkov noted that for elimination of ICBMs and SLBMs, Russia did not see any difference between the processes for Russian solid-propellant ICBMs and those for the U.S. Minuteman III (MM-III) ICBM. He stated that Russia intended to use "unified" procedures to eliminate the same categories of missiles, whether mobile or silo-based, and that the START experience of elimination of liquid propellant missiles demonstrated how each side could independently choose its own procedures.

-- Subsection V: Regarding declared facilities, Ryzhkov said they would be considered eliminated once all strategic offensive arms (SOAs) at the facility had been removed or eliminated and a notification of that fact had been provided.

¶13. (S) Ryzhkov negatively compared START with how facts

were confirmed in other treaties and stated that Russia conducted over 70 inspections annually for the Vienna Document without any comment. The text of the Vienna Document was simple, with no detailed, agreed-upon procedures -- hence, there were almost no problems. Ryzhkov admitted that SOA treaties were more complex and difficult, but START had been negotiated during the Cold War and the mission now was to make the new treaty easier to implement.

¶14. (S) Zaytsev interjected to point out the START "paradox" of the four U.S. ballistic missile submarines converted to cruise missile carriers. According to the Treaty, these boats were still considered to be Trident I ballistic missile submarines despite the fact that the United States no longer had such a missile in service.

¶15. (S) Elliott explained that this was due in part to START's higher limits, under which the United States had no need to completely remove these launchers from accountability, therefore, the debate was not enjoined. Elliott then requested clarification on the Russian position on removal of hatches from launch tubes, asking whether the intent was to make the submarine no longer useful as a submarine, or to make the launcher incapable of launching a missile of the type for which it is declared.

¶16. (S) Ryzhkov repeated that each side could determine its own elimination procedures. However, where necessary, there would need to be some specific procedures added. Ryzhkov noted that confirmation of elimination procedures using NTM for SLBM launchers was more difficult than for silo launchers. Therefore, the Russian proposal included removal or destruction of the hatches as one of the key elements, but Ryzhkov reiterated that each side could determine procedures for itself.

¶17. (S) Siemon asked about the Russian view of the relationship between demonstrations and eliminations and whether the Russians always planned to provide a demonstration prior to eliminations. Ryzhkov replied that demonstrations would only be conducted for conversions and would not be used to show the conversion procedures, only the final result of the conversion.

¶18. (S) Elliott indicated he heard a difference between the START Treaty and the Russian START Follow-on approach, and asked whether Russia viewed the conversion of submarine launchers from nuclear to non-nuclear in the same way as conversion of a nuclear HB to a non-nuclear HB. Ryzhkov said no, START allowed only for conversion of ballistic missile launchers from one type to another, as well as conversion of HB. Ryzhkov stated that if the United States was asking whether it was possible to convert nuclear ballistic missiles to non-nuclear, the Russian position was that this was not allowed.

¶19. (S) Elliott asked whether Russia would view a proposal to convert a U.S. Trident II submarine in the same manner as they would view conversion of Trident I submarines into non-nuclear cruise missile carriers. In response, Ryzhkov referred to Zaytsev's earlier example of the Trident I conversion to point out that Russia did not consider this conversion to be in compliance with applicable START

procedures. Ryzhkov said that, in the Russian approach to START Follow-on, it was essential to convince the other side that the item could not be used for its original purpose, but that detailed procedures or excessive requirements were not necessary.

¶20. (S) Siemon asked whether, under Russia's concept, the Parties would provide descriptions of the elimination procedures they had decided for themselves. Ryzhkov answered that information on the elimination procedures would be provided in the elimination notifications, just as was being done already for liquid-fueled ICBMs under START. The notification regime would be changed very little, and notifications would indicate what each Party was doing.

¶21. (S) Elliott raised a theoretical issue on facility elimination, asking whether the conversion of all U.S. B-1 bombers at a base to non-nuclear also meant that the base itself would be considered eliminated, as there were no more nuclear weapons at the base. Before Ryzhkov could respond, both Colonel Novikov and Mr. Smirnov engaged him in a short and intense side-bar conversation. Just as Ryzhkov was beginning to answer, Smirnov cut him off, saying in Russian "No, the bases stay." (Begin comment: This statement by Smirnov was not translated by the Russian interpreter. End comment.) Ryzhkov then asked for a short break to discuss the matter with his group. The Russians made no further comments to Elliott's question other than to suggest that the question might be resolved when discussing notifications.

¶22. (S) Comeau questioned Ryzhkov about an earlier statement made on the similarities between the elimination procedures for the Russian SS-25 and the U.S. MM-III ICBM. Ryzhkov replied he had made the statement only to illustrate that methods used for the elimination of any solid-propellant missile could be alike. For the removal of the fuel, Ryzhkov noted that it could either be burned or one could drill holes in the rocket motors.

¶23. (S) Comeau then asked about elimination of the launch canisters, since this was a fundamental difference between U.S. and Russian missiles. Ryzhkov dismissed the issue, claiming that the launch canister had nothing to do with the functioning of the missile. The approach to elimination of missiles was what mattered, and if the Parties got bogged down in specific procedures for every item, they would be in Geneva until next winter.

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SHORT NOTES ON NOTIFICATIONS  
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¶24. (S) Ryzhkov stated that the system of notifications was one of the basic elements of verification and it would be foolish to reject positive mechanisms from START. However, the notification regime required some adaptation or improvement due to changes in counting rules, inspection procedures, as well as Core procedures.

¶25. (S) Ryzhkov proposed to retain data exchanges, which would also incorporate additional notifications on the aggregate numbers of warheads per base, as well as the number of ICBMs, SLBMs, and HBs per base. The timing of data

exchanges could be the same as under START, with the first exchange to occur no later than 30 days after entry into force and every six months thereafter. He also proposed to unify all notifications on changes to the status of SOA in each category and transmit the changes no later than five days after the change. Russia would also retain notifications on flight-tests for SLBMs and ICBMs. Russia would delete the remainder of the START Notification Protocol Section I notifications, such as those on former and retired types.

¶26. (S) Russia proposed to retain notifications on HB movements between facilities, and for HB between any location. Ryzhkov noted that both Parties had a verification problem under START with HB visits to non-declared facilities and that U.S. movement of HB outside national territory needed to be fixed. To resolve the issue, Ryzhkov proposed that both sides provide notifications for the movement of an HB to any location no later than 24 hours prior to the

arrival for visits lasting more than 24 hours. This would be easier for operational personnel to report than the 8-hour timeline required under START provisions, would enhance transparency, and allow for better tracking of the other's HB assets, in Ryzhkov's opinion.

¶27. (S) The Russians proposed to delete notifications pertaining specifically to mobile missiles--those for rail-mobile missiles, cooperative measures, portal monitoring, and post-dispersal exercises. Russia would retain notifications on flight-tests for SLBMs and ICBMs. However, Russia proposed to delete notifications for throw-weight, as this parameter was not subject to verification by the United States or Russia; notifications on the reduction of the number of warheads for ICBMs and SLBMs; and would not provide telemetric frequencies for notifications of ballistic missile test launches. Ryzhkov stated that Russia had no intention to provide telemetric information via the notification protocol or otherwise.

¶28. (S) The Russians also proposed to add a few new sections to the notifications: one pertaining to removal from accountability; one for additional information; and one on inspections, visits, and exhibitions, all with the purpose of unifying these notifications in one section.

¶29. (S) Ryzhkov concluded his remarks by stating that many of the notifications had been overcome by events, as U.S. and Russian military cooperation had increased during the past 20 years. The Russians had removed and combined notification elements that reflected our current relationship.

¶30. (S) Siemon advised Ryzhkov that the United States was still working on its proposed Notification Protocol, but warned that it would not be as brief as the Russian proposal and would contain some issues the Russians would not like, such as notifications on portal monitoring, cooperative measures, and telemetry. Siemon explained that this was not an expression of dissatisfaction with the Russian proposals, simply a reflection of the U.S. approach to treaty provisions we wanted to retain. Siemon noted that the Core WG would take its lead from the plenary and adjust as decisions are made. Ryzhkov agreed with the imperative to resolve several conceptual issues before some subsections of the annex could

be agreed, but asserted that the working groups could make progress on many issues in the meantime. Siemon commented that the United States shared Russia's goal of reducing the volume of the new treaty. Ryzhkov laughed and said that was not noticeable to the Russians.

¶31. (U) Documents exchanged, None.

¶32. (U) Participants

U.S.

Mr. Elliott  
Mr. Siemon  
LCDR Brons  
Lt Col Comeau  
Mr. Dwyer  
Dr. Fraley  
Mr. Hanchett  
LTC Leyde  
Mr. McConnell  
Ms. Purcell  
Mr. Strauss  
Ms. Gross(Int)

RUSSIA

Col Ryzhkov  
Amb Antonov  
Col Izrazov  
Ms. Kotkova  
Mr. Leontiev



Col Novikov  
Mr. Smirnov  
Col Zaytsev  
Ms. Komshilova (Int)

133. (U) Gottemoeller sends.  
GRIFFITHS